

**DATE:** April 9, 2026

**TO:** Library Board, Pima County Public Library  
Pima County Board of Supervisors  
Pima County Administration  
Friends of the Pima County Public Library, Board of Directors  
Friends of the Arivaca Library, Board of Directors  
Friends of the Esmond Station Library, Board of Directors  
Friends of the Kirk-Bear Canyon Library, Board of Directors  
Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library, Board of Directors  
Friends of the Pima-Green Valley Library, Board of Directors  
Pima Library Foundation, Board of Directors

**FROM:** Marissa Alcorta  
Deputy Library Director

**SUBJECT: Community Engagement and Support Services Report – March 2026**

March was a month of planning with ongoing partnerships. We are in the middle of coordination of the Cooling Season in collaboration with the Pima County Health Dept. We will once again provide space in our libraries or the community to come in and get out of the heat and get supplies and information on heat-related illnesses. This year, the libraries will be designated as “Library Cooling Spaces”. All our library branches will participate, with the exception of El Pueblo (limited hours) and Himmel (closed for renovation). We will once again collect data for PCHD on how much of our community comes into the library to use our spaces to get cool. Supplies available to give to community members this year will be water, cooling towels, sunscreen, lip balm, Gatorade electrolyte packets, and reusable water bottles. We will be participating officially from May 4<sup>th</sup>-September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Affinity Teams – Alina Rowe**

#### **❖ Biblio Lotus:**

Biblio Lotus co-hosted author Kiera Wright-Ruiz on March 28th with Nuestras Raices for a live Zoom interview. Kiera Wright-Ruiz is a cookbook author and, in her cookbook, My (Half) Latinx Kitchen, in which she discussed her half Latinx and half Asian identity and how her journey to understand her identity helped shape and influenced her recipes and cooking.

Biblio Lotus finalized programming for May's AANHPI Month. Biblio Lotus is collaborating with Synapse to promote mental health awareness for May and has booked a local Filipina illustrator/artist, Milani Hunt, who will do a relaxing style watercolor program at Joel D Valdez Main Library on Friday, May 8th and at Kirk Bear-Canyon Library on Saturday, May 16th.

Synapse will be present at each program with mental health resources and materials as well. The plan is to also to collaborate with Synapse on a blog post and put together a book list. The Team also finalized their May 14th, calligrapher program with Ping Situ, who had formerly been hosted at Himmel for many years. Ping is scheduled to be at Martha Cooper and will write patrons' names in calligraphy for them. There will also be one or two craft stations for patrons who are waiting their turn.

The Biblio Lotus team members have also been reaching out to various performers and artists from the Pima County Asian community to cultivate a list of other diverse programs that we might schedule in the future.

❖ **Nuestras Raíces and Latinx Services:**

The Latinx team kicked off the month of March strong by presenting all the amazing work they had done all year long in preparation for the annual Tucson Festival of Books at the Library Advisory Board meeting on March 6! All the authors and panels were shared along with some Nuestras Raíces rack cards, bookmarks, and other swag.

The team was invited to present information on March 12, 2026, about the Many Nations and Nuestras Raíces team at the University of Arizona Hispanic Serving Institute Book Club. The book club also wanted to hear about the author panels that were highlighted under the Nuestras Raíces tent at the Tucson Festival of Books.

The Latinx team met with the founder of the Peace Garden to talk about collaborating with them and the Valencia branch to have a celebration in honor of Día de la Niñez that will be coming in April. More details to come!

The Latinx services team were busy being interviewed by many news sources. All interviews were in support of promoting the Tucson Festival of Book and our Nuestras Raíces tent. The team was interviewed by Ofelia Montelongo from Arizona State University Bilingual Press, This is Tucson, the Daily Star, and by AZ Luminaria!

Unfortunately, our March 13<sup>th</sup> author talk event featuring author Jonny Garza Villa had to be cancelled due to their flight cancelation.

On the weekend of March 14 and 15 the Latinx team presented their long awaited Nuestras Raíces author panels at the Tucson Festival of Books! We had over 1000 attendees visit our tent over the weekend, gave away over 2000 books, and we were able to partner with the Arizona State University Bilingual Press who also distributed over 2000 Spanish or Bilingual books, DVDs, and Posters! We also collaborated with Tome Gnome to highlight some of our authors on our stage this year!

Our team also presented on March 25 at the Service U Teams Day and shared information about our Nuestras Raíces team to all the new staff that have recently joined the Pima County Public Library.

On March 25 our team attended the Spring Encuentro at Pueblo High School. Families received gently used books, new books, and library swag.

To conclude our eventful March, we held a virtual author talk and cooking demonstration by Kiera Wright-Ruiz in collaboration with the Biblio Lotus Affinity Team. Author Kiera Wright-Ruiz presented a cooking demonstration of Mexican Hot Chocolate Cookies and a question-and-answer session after the demonstration. Kiera is an author whose Ecuadorian and Korean background inspired her cookbook, *My Half Latinx Kitchen*. Kiera presented from her home in Japan!

❖ **Pride:**

Pride collaborated with the Nuestras Raíces team to provide an author visit at Martha Cooper Library on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> from 3-4:30pm. The event was to feature award-winning author Jonny Garza Villa, author of *Futbolista*, who was also going to be present at the

Tucson Festival of Books. Both Pride and Nuestras Raíces planned on tabling at this event but unfortunately, Jonny's flight was cancelled and was unable to attend this event.

❖ **Many Nations:**

On March 12th, Community Engagement Manager of Latinx Services and the President of Many Nations went to the University of Arizona to speak with the Bookstore's Book Club about their Affinity Team presence at the Tucson Festival of Books.

Later that evening, Many Nations team members attended an Authorial event in celebration of Cynthia Leitch Smith at the Howenstine High Magnet School hosted by their Native American Student Services.

On March 14th and March 15th, Many Nations partnered with the Nuestras Raíces Tent at the Tucson Festival of Books with Indigenous Author Panels/Moderators, Arts & Crafts station for children and a shared Resource Table of poetry materials and swag items.

The President of Many Nations created and moderated "Golden Hour: Showcase of Youth Poets" with 70+ attendees at the YA Author Stage. It was a showcase of 15 youth poets where all families could come and listen to young and diverse voices across the Southwest. Poetry swag and writing materials were distributed in goodie bags for their participation.

On March 25th, the President presented at "Teams Day!" about the Many Nations team at ServiceU, a cohort of new Library Practitioners in the Pima County Public Library system.

On March 28th, the team participated in the Tohono O'odham Young Women's Gathering with confidence building and STEAM-like programming with 50+ attendees in the San Xavier District. The President and Vice-President officiated two activities entitled "Plant Knowledge through Lip Balm and Hand Salves" & "How-To Planting for Watermelon and Hibiscus Flowers." Informative zines were created for both activities and goodie bags with Many Nations materials were distributed to all attendees.

- "Empowering Young O'odham Women with Vision and Guidance to Stand Strong in their Identity, Strength, Self-Love, and Self-Respect."

❖ **Synapse:**

On March 9, Synapse's postcard-writing project officially ended. The program was a resounding success across the system, with multiple branches of all sizes requesting postcard restock throughout the monthlong program. Staff across the system report positive patron feedback and having enjoyed encouraging and informative conversations with patrons surrounding the program and the work of the Synapse team. Several branches incorporated the project into their own programming, with both Dusenberry-River Library and Kirk-Bear Canyon Library building the postcards into community Valentine's Day events.

On March 25, Synapse team leadership presented at ServiceU *Teams Day*, during which new and newly promoted Pima County Public Library staff had the opportunity to get to know the Library's Affinity teams and internal working groups. During this presentation, Synapse staff talked about the team's mission, vision, and values and our internal and external programs and projects within the library and wider Pima County communities.

### ❖ **Welcome to America:**

This March, our partner organization Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest hosted an International Women's Day celebration at Freedom Park, in the Twenty Ninth Street Thrive Zone. This event invited community members of all backgrounds to come together in celebration of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The Welcome to America Team came prepared with lots of giveaway books in many languages, including like Arabic, Dari, English, Swahili, Spanish and Ukrainian. Staff also had Wonder Woman crowns for kids to wear, and they were a big hit, with little superheroes enjoying the lovely day in community. The team is always overjoyed to spread literacy to the youth and families in our community and hope to be invited back to this event in future years.

### **Adult Services/Workforce and Economic Development-Ken Zambos**

Here is a blog post written by Matthew Landon, Adult Services Community Engagement Manager, about the Dream Fair:

*Join us at the DREAM Job Fair and the pre-job fair workshop!*

*Pima County Public Library (PCPL) is proud to partner with Goodwill Career Centers, Arizona @ Work, DES, Beacon Group, Banner Health, and others for the DREAM Job Fair on Tuesday, March 24, 2026. Twice a year the dedicated members of the DREAM committee get together and organize a job fair for any person with a disability.*

*This year, more than 35 employers will be represented at the fair, ready to talk to you and take your resumes, including Wal-Mart, Eegee's, Habitat for Humanity, TUSD, Pima County, and Pima Community College. PCPL plays its part in providing computers at the fair for job seekers to connect and apply with employers online or polish their resumes.*

*In the week leading to the job fair, the DREAM Committee hosts a workshop for job seekers with community resources, mock interviews, a job-ready fashion show and access to free job appropriate clothing. Library Human Resources staff will be there to take you through a mock interview and give you valuable feedback. This year's workshop is on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.*

*The DREAM Committee has been active in Southern Arizona for more than 12 years. This is your opportunity to meet face-to-face with many employers in the greater Tucson area. If you are looking for work and want to explore the job scene, this is your time to get prepared and take the next step in your work life.*

*Mitch Eskritt, co-chair of the DREAM Committee and Director of Marketing and Development for Beacon Group, says, "Two-thirds of working age people with disabilities do not have a job. The DREAM Job Fair aims to change that by creating a space where people with disabilities can meet employers who want to build a high quality, diverse workforce"*

*The DREAM Workshop runs from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm Kino Event Center, Kino North Complex at 2805 E. Ajo Way, on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.*

*The DREAM Job Fair runs from 10:00 am to 12 noon at Kino Event Center, Kino North Complex at 2805 E. Ajo Way, on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.*

### **Youth Services-Birth to 8 and Young Adults-Monique Perez**

The highlight of March for Youth Services was the culmination of months of planning for the Tucson Festival of Books. Tito Lopez (Community Engagement Manager – Youth Services) chaired the planning of the Teen Tent which provided various activities including book cover, bookmark, and button making. The Arizona Governors Youth Commission provided interactive

tabling both Saturday and Sunday with education and interaction through their session titled “Your Voice, Your Power: Youth Leadership and Substance Use Prevention”. Comic Creator and Illustrator, Jojo Seames also tabled sharing her knowledge and experience related to comic creation.

In the same area, hundreds of books were given out for free to Tweens and Teens at the Teen Book Giveaway. Special thanks to Friends of the Pima County Public Library and the University of Arizona College of Education Worlds of Words (Kathy Short) for donating books for youth to enjoy. This year, we were also able to provide brand new Manga titles, which were a huge hit! Along with the Teen Activity and Book Giveaway Tents, Teen-Author interviews took place inside of the University of Arizona Main Library. The interviews are youth led and facilitated/edited by Carl Murdock (Librarian), with each session running right up to the allotted time. This opportunity provides a wonderful opportunity for both authors and teens to connect, engage, and have fun.

Last but certainly not least, we concluded the Festival of Books on a high note with Golden Hour: A Celebration of Youth Poets, organized and led by Lindsey Curley (Birth-8 Librarian and Many Nations President). 15 youth submitted and shared their poems on stage in a beautiful and moving session. This was the first year Golden Hour took place, and it was a huge success; we hope to continue in following years.

A huge thank you to our colleagues who supported us in planning and working on the Festival of Books with us! It truly is a team effort and celebration.

#### **Collection Development/Tech Services – Kate DeMeester-Lane**

During the month of March, we began placing test orders with Ingram for high demand titles. Their program is called InDemand, and we hope to start filling holds with these books by mid to late April. This is an important first step in getting new materials back out to the public quickly.

The Richard Elias-Mission Library collection was set during March with a temporary Opening Day Collection, comprised of materials pulled from other locations. We are continuing to work with our vendors to get a full Opening Day Collection for this location, and as it arrives it will replace the temporary materials. We hope to have the full collection in place by the end of June